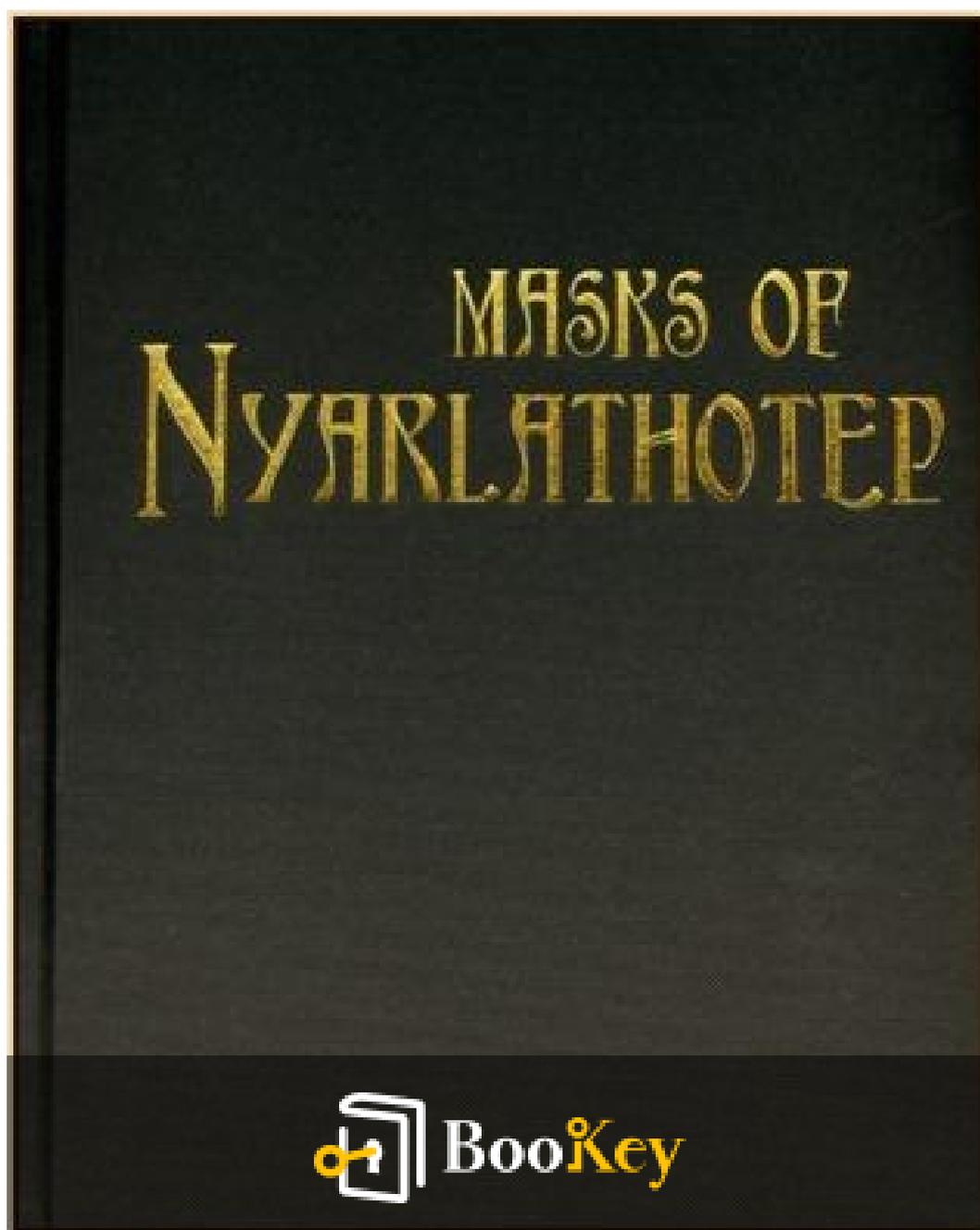


Masks Of Nyarlathotep PDF (Limited Copy)

Larry Ditillio



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Masks Of Nyarlathotep Summary

Unraveling insanity amidst ancient cosmic horrors.

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About the book

In the shadowy realms of cosmic horror, "Masks of Nyarlathotep" unfolds as an intricate tapestry of madness, mystery, and malevolent influence, beckoning players into a world where the boundaries of sanity blur under the weight of ancient, insatiable gods. As explorers of the occult and seekers of truth, your fate intertwines with the infamous Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, whose myriad masks hide sinister intentions and devastating power. Traveling across the globe from the bustling streets of London to the mystical sands of Egypt, this thrilling campaign challenges players to confront not only the harrowing emanations of a god but also the deeper, often darker aspects of their own humanity. Will you dare to uncover the secrets hidden in the darkness, or will you succumb to the inevitable descent into madness? Embark on a journey where every choice can lead to salvation or doom, and the ultimate goal is not just to survive, but to unravel the sinister plot that threatens to plunge the world into eternal night.

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About the author

Larry Ditillio is a talented American writer and game designer best known for his contributions to the realms of tabletop role-playing games and speculative fiction. With a background in theater and a keen understanding of narrative mechanics, Ditillio has played a pivotal role in developing iconic games and settings, notably in the realms of Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu and other influential titles in the gaming community. His creative prowess is especially evident in his work on Masks of Nyarlathotep, where he masterfully weaves elements of horror and mystery into a compelling narrative that captivates both seasoned players and newcomers alike. Throughout his career, Ditillio has demonstrated a unique ability to blend storytelling with interactive gameplay, solidifying his status as a significant figure in the world of fantasy literature and gaming.

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Chapter 1 Summary: Prologue: Peru

In the prologue of "Masks Of Nyarlathotep," we are introduced to a dark and chilling narrative that revolves around Augustus Larkin, a man under the sinister influence of Nyarlathotep, an ancient and malevolent god. Drugged and helpless, Larkin has been tattooed with a representation of the Bloody Tongue, creating a direct link between his consciousness and Nyarlathotep, allowing the god to manipulate him and even possess him at times. As a result, Larkin's physical condition deteriorates; his flesh rots, and his blood turns to a black, tar-like substance.

Under Nyarlathotep's influence, Larkin has spent years traveling and executing the god's dark desires, culminating in his arrival in Peru with the nefarious aim of releasing an avatar known as El Padre de los Gusanos, or the Father of Maggots, imprisoned for millennia within a hidden pyramid in the Andes. This structure, built by the Tiwanaku civilization, has earned a fearsome reputation among locals who steer clear of the area due to its evil aura.

Larkin's history reveals a once-privileged life in Kenya, squandered through drink and debauchery until he fell into the clutches of M'Weru, a manipulative woman who drew him into the cult of the Bloody Tongue. This cult worships Nyarlathotep, which ultimately led to Larkin's current state as a mere pawn of an ancient horror.

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In the chapter, we also learn about the kharisiri, a mythological group of vampiric creatures first created when conquistadors inadvertently freed the flesh-hungry larvae of the Father of Maggots. These lauded kharisiri became mindless servants until the presence of Nyarlathotep restored a semblance of intelligence to them, resulting in a plan to expand their numbers and consume human victims.

The storyline connects to future events, emphasizing Jackson Elias, an American writer who has been investigating the kharisiri legend. His discoveries lead him to Peru, where he suspects connections with a death cult and the wretched actions of Larkin and de Mendoza, one of the kharisiri. Elias plans to meet the investigators, whom Larkin has recruited for an expedition to the pyramid, unknowingly placing them in grave danger.

This chapter sets a compelling tone filled with themes of manipulation, the terrifying influence of ancient gods, and the intersection of myth and reality. The narrative foreshadows dark encounters and pivotal choices for the characters as they delve deeper into secrets of the pyramid and the ominous fate that awaits them.

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Chapter 2 Summary: Campaign Beginning

In Chapter 2 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep" by Larry Ditillio, the stage is set for a mystery that pulls the main characters back into the web of dark secrets and dangerous cults. The action kicks off with a radiogram from their old friend, Jackson Elias, who has been on a quest to investigate strange groups around the world. This message serves as both a call to arms and a foreshadowing of the terror that awaits them.

The chapter highlights the backstory of the investigators, who share a history with Elias, including a previous adventure in Peru that solidified their bond. Even if some players did not participate in that specific adventure, they still maintain a connection with Elias through intermittent correspondence. The excitement builds as they learn that Elias is in dire need of their help, urging them to assemble in New York City by January 15, 1925, to discuss a vital matter.

As the investigators start to gather, they are reminded of the unsettling events surrounding the ill-fated Carlyle Expedition, which is central to Elias' radiogram. The chapter includes excerpts from newspapers detailing the expedition's rise and tragic fall, hinting at the dark forces at play in Africa and the secrets that might be unearthed. This information leads the characters to realize the gravity of the situation and the potential horrors associated with the Carlyle Expedition.

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Themes of camaraderie, the pursuit of knowledge, and the fine line between curiosity and madness emerge as the investigators prepare for their meeting with Elias. The anticipation and mystery are palpable as they confront their past and prepare for the unknown, which threatens not just their lives but the very fabric of their reality. The interplay of human weakness against the backdrop of cosmic dread sets the tone for the harrowing journey that lies ahead, inviting readers to delve deeper into a world where forbidden knowledge lurks just out of sight.

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Chapter 3: America

In Chapter 3 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep," the investigators get pulled into a web of mystery and danger that centers around the late Jackson Elias, a friend who had called upon them for help with troubling information regarding the Carlyle Expedition, which had mysteriously vanished. This journey starts in New York City, where Elias is tragically murdered before the investigators can meet him at Hotel Chelsea. The chapter unfolds as the investigators navigate a world of cults, police corruption, and dark secrets tied to the Carlyle Expedition.

The Carlyle Expedition was led by Roger Carlyle, a wealthy socialite who became entangled with M'Weru, a priestess associated with a sinister cult known as the Cult of the Bloody Tongue. Along with a team that included Hypatia Masters, Dr. Robert Huston, and Sir Aubrey Penhew, they ventured into the depths of the unknown, exploring ancient African secrets. Their expedition ended in slaughter, leaving lingering questions about what truly happened.

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Chapter 4 Summary: England

In Chapter 4 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep" by Larry Ditillio, the narrative unfolds in England, where players are encouraged to investigate the connections between the mysterious deaths and the cultic activities of the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh, tied to the Carlyle Expedition. The chapter serves as a thrilling midpoint in the campaign, allowing players to explore London, its underbelly, and nearby locales such as Derby and Essex.

Upon arriving in London, investigators are drawn into the thread of Jackson Elias, venturing through various encounters that lead them to key players like Edward Gavigan, the high priest of the cult, and Zahra Shafik, who aspires to take Gavigan's place in the Brotherhood's hierarchy. They can follow clues through myriad leads including newspaper articles and personal communications, particularly the alarming series of "Egyptian murders" pursued by Inspector Barrington of Scotland Yard. The atmosphere is thick with tension as cultist activity becomes increasingly pronounced, characterized by fog-laden streets and the looming threat of violence.

The chapter's key themes revolve around trust and betrayal, with Zahra Shafik presenting a complex dilemma—whether to ally with her to thwart Gavigan, or risk falling into her own machinations. The investigation leads players to discover Gavigan's domain in Misr House, where he conducts dark ceremonies under the guise of respectable society.

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In their search, the players encounter various NPCs, including Mickey Mahoney, a scrappy tabloid editor; Inspector Barrington, who is deeply engrossed in the murder investigations; and the paranoid Miles Shipley, a mad artist forced to create horrific works under the influence of a serpent person. Each character adds depth, suggesting that what lies beneath the surface of English propriety is layered with horrors that connect back to Egypt and the broader Mythos.

As the chapter reaches its climax, players face moral dilemmas, potential captures, and palpable danger. Their choices can lead to confrontations with Gavigan or uncover darker implications of Shafik's ambitions. Ultimately, Chapter 4 sets up high stakes for the investigators as they delve deeper into a world of cults, threats lurking within the fog, and the dark legacies of ancient powers. It concludes with various potential endings based on player decisions, influencing their path onward to Africa or Asia in their quest against Nyarlathotep's schemes.

Aspect	Details
Location	England (London, Derby, Essex)
Main Objective	Investigate mysterious deaths linked to the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh and the Carlyle Expedition.
Key Characters	Edward Gavigan (high priest of the cult), Zahra Shafik (aspiring to replace Gavigan), Mickey Mahoney (tabloid editor), Inspector Barrington



Aspect	Details
	(investigating murders), Miles Shipley (mad artist).
Themes	Trust and betrayal; moral dilemmas; duality of characters.
Key Events	Investigators delve into Jackson Elias's story; follow leads from press and Inspector Barrington; explore Misr House; encounter cult activities.
Atmosphere	Tense, filled with fog, characterized by violence and danger.
Climax	Players face potentially dangerous confrontations; critical decisions about alliances.
Conclusion	Sets high stakes for future challenges; influences direction of players' next quests (Africa or Asia).

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Complexity of Trust and Betrayal

Critical Interpretation: As you navigate through the intricate web of alliances and deceptions in 'Masks of Nyarlathotep', you are reminded of the profound truth in your own life: trust can often be the sharpest weapon, and betrayal lurks in the shadows of ambition. Embrace this complexity; let it inspire you to cultivate honesty in your relationships, encouraging open dialogue and transparency. By doing so, you not only fortify the bonds with those around you but also enhance your capacity to discern the true intentions of others, transforming the potential for betrayal into a source of strength and resilience.

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Chapter 5 Summary: Egypt

In Chapter 5 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep," the narrative immerses the investigators in the mysterious and ominous atmosphere of Egypt, a crucial setting for the campaign. The journey begins as the players seek connections to Roger Carlyle and his expedition, with clues leading them to Cairo. The looming threat of the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh becomes apparent, driven by Omar al-Shakti's ambition to resurrect Queen Nitocris.

The chapter is rich with character interactions, emphasizing the cultural and linguistic barriers the investigators must navigate in this foreign land. They encounter various locals, including Faraz Najjar—an antiquities dealer scarred by his past with the Brotherhood—and the enigmatic Dr. Ali Kafour, curator of the Egyptian Museum, who holds valuable knowledge about ancient artifacts and the occult. Their inquiries lead to revelations about significant historical figures, including Carlyle and the ill-fated Carlyle Expedition, embroiled in dark rituals relating to the Black Pharaoh.

As they piece together historical clues, the investigators learn about the artifacts necessary for Nitocris's resurrection—the Crown, the Necklace, and the Girdle—and encounter dangers ranging from cultist attacks to the eerie atmosphere beneath the pyramids. Their exploration involves visits to significant locations like the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, where the Girdle resides, and the Bent Pyramid, an essential site tied to Nyarlathotep.

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The narrative also features the sinister cult practices, with scenes of ritual sacrifices invoking horror and potential insanity. The events escalate as the investigators uncover the Brotherhood's violent response to any perceived threats to their plan, building a palpable tension throughout the chapter.

Critical character developments arise as players interact with significant NPCs. They can form alliances or harshly confront adversaries, making choices that will shape their path. The chapter culminates in opportunities for deep exploration of ancient Egyptian magic and potential confrontations with the god Nyarlathotep, leading investigators into dire situations filled with moral ambiguity and high stakes.

Ultimately, Chapter 5 presents a vivid, immersive experience in a land steeped in history, mystery, and danger, inviting players to confront both external threats and the dark aspects of their own actions as they navigate the treacherous landscape in pursuit of knowledge and survival.

Element	Description
Setting	Egypt, with a focus on Cairo, serving as a central location for the narrative.
Main Objective	Uncover connections to Roger Carlyle and his expedition.
Antagonists	Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh, led by Omar al-Shakti.

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Element	Description
Key Characters	Faraz Najjar (antiquities dealer) and Dr. Ali Kafour (curator of the Egyptian Museum).
Important Artifacts	Crown, Necklace, and Girdle necessary for Nitocris's resurrection.
Locations Explored	Mosque of Ibn Tulun (location of the Girdle) and the Bent Pyramid (linked to Nyarlathotep).
Themes	Ritual sacrifice, the supernatural, moral ambiguity, and cultural barriers.
Character Development	Players interact with NPCs to form alliances or confront adversaries, influencing their journey.
Conflict	Escalating threats from the Brotherhood as investigators learn more about their plans.
Overall Experience	Immersive atmosphere full of history and danger, leading to moral choices and high stakes.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of confronting fears and moral ambiguity

Critical Interpretation: As you navigate the treacherous landscape of Egypt, confronting the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh, you are reminded of the delicate balance between knowledge and power. This chapter encourages you to face your fears head-on, recognizing that true strength lies not just in victory over external threats, but in the bravery to confront your own moral dilemmas. Embrace the unknown and make choices that define your character, for just like the investigators, your journey through life is filled with complexities that call for courage and introspection.

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Chapter 6: Kenya

In Chapter 6 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep," the narrative unfolds in Kenya, revealing the dark legacy of the Carlyle Expedition and the myriad dangers that the investigators must navigate. The chapter opens with important NPCs, including M'Weru and Sam Mariga, setting the stage for the investigation into the cult of the Bloody Tongue and the ominous Mountain of the Black Wind.

The Carlyle Expedition, disguised as a safari, visited Kenya in 1919 but became embroiled in a horrifying ritual that led to the sacrifice of bearers and a descent into madness for some of its members. The chapter describes their journey from Nairobi to the mountain, detailing key interactions with local figures such as the eccentric Neville Jermyn and the helpful Sam Mariga, who can guide the investigators.

Throughout their stay, the investigators face harassment from Taan Kaur, an agent of the Bloody Tongue cult, and need to gather leads to find the Mountain of the Black Wind. The narrative hints at the impending birth of

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 7 Summary: Australia

Chapter 7 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep" by Larry Ditillio transports the investigators to the arid landscapes of Australia, specifically focusing on the mysterious activities involving Robert Huston and the ancient, hidden Yithian city. The chapter emphasizes the link between the Carlyle Expedition and the sinister cultistic practices happening in the Australian outback, hinting at a hidden agenda powered by Nyarlathotep.

The setup begins with the investigators discovering a significant ruby marking in Western Australia on an ancient map, drawing them to the Great Sandy Desert. A timeline details the activities of Huston and others involved with cultist activities reaching into the 1920s, weaving a narrative that showcases the descent into madness linked to the discovery of ancient ruins.

Investigators are guided through various locations including Port Hedland, Cuncudgerie, and other stark Australian towns, each revealing bits of information about the cult of the Sand Bat and their sacrifices of Aboriginal Australians. Characters such as Professor Cowles and mining engineer Robert Mackenzie serve as allies, providing crucial insights into the whereabouts of Huston and the Yithian city.

As they venture into the outback, the mood darkens, filled with dangers from both the environment and the presence of cultists. The chapter brings forth

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ghostly folklore, as seen with the figure of Bill Buckley, whose tragic story links to the larger narrative of vengeance and sacrifice. The sidetrack unravels a haunting tale of lost souls, pushing the investigators into moral quandaries about life and death.

The atmosphere intensifies in the Great Sandy Desert where the investigators face harsh conditions, the fear of the unknown undergoing an exploration of bizarre alien artifacts and the nefarious cult's success in employing mind control devices over individuals. The cult's rituals culminate in gruesome sacrifices at the temple within the City of the Great Race, where investigators confront mystical entities and the malevolent whim of Huston, who strives to open the Great Gate for Nyarlathotep.

Finally, the chapter closes with several possible confrontations, where the investigators can take various paths—brute force through Huston's main entrance or stealth through a backdoor, culminating in a climactic battle not just for their survival but for the fate of humanity. Success against these dark cultists yields rewards, providing a poignant conclusion that echoes the themes of madness, sacrifice, and the unfathomable powers that lurk beneath the surface of reality.

Key Aspect	Description
Setting	Arid landscapes of Australia, specifically the Great Sandy Desert.

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Key Aspect	Description
Main Characters	Robert Huston, Professor Cowles, Robert Mackenzie
Plot Overview	Investigators follow clues to uncover cult activities related to the Carlyle Expedition and ancient Yithian city.
Significant Event	Discovery of a ruby marking leads to exploration of cultist activities and sacrifices of Aboriginal Australians.
Themes	Madness, sacrifice, and the struggle against nefarious forces.
Quests and Locations	Port Hedland, Cuncudgerie, facing dangers of the outback and investigating the cult of the Sand Bat.
Atmosphere	Dark, filled with folklore and ghostly tales, particularly regarding Bill Buckley.
Conflict	Confrontation with cultists in the Great Sandy Desert, facing both environmental hazards and mystical threats.
Climax	Confrontation at the City of the Great Race, involving choices between brute force and stealth.
Conclusion	Investigators can achieve success against cultists, emphasizing the themes of survival and moral dilemmas.

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Chapter 8 Summary: China

In Chapter 8 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep," the plot unfolds in Shanghai, where players—acting as investigators—interact with a landscape filled with intriguing characters, dangerous foes, and pivotal developments that push the story toward its climax. Shanghai is depicted as a complex fusion of Western and Eastern cultures, fraught with remnants of colonialism, local sects, and dark cult activities led by the Order of the Bloated Woman, dedicated to Nyarlathotep.

Jack Brady, a key ally who has distanced himself from the disbanded Carlyle Expedition, provides essential information about the cult's plans, revealing that Sir Aubrey Penhew is alive and has established operations on Gray Dragon Island. Brady's motivations are driven by his desire to thwart the cult's sinister activities, especially their plan involving a rocket designed to open the Great Gate, a portal set to unleash unspeakable horrors upon the world.

The chapter intricately weaves in clues that lead the players to confront various factions vying for power and control in Shanghai. The Order of the Bloated Woman, with its deep one hybrids and gruesome rituals, emerges as a significant threat. Throughout their investigation, players must navigate encounters and combatants including Ho Fang, the Order's powerful leader, and Carl Stanford, a notorious sorcerer connected to Nyarlathotep.

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Themes of survival, loyalty, and the ever-looming threat of madness pervade the narrative. The contrast between the deceptive serenity of Shanghai and the malevolent undercurrents of its society serves as a chilling backdrop for the players' journey. They must gather resources and learn crucial secrets—such as the existence of valuable tomes like the Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan—to combat the impending doom orchestrated by Nyarlathotep and his followers.

As the players delve deeper, they eventually converge on Gray Dragon Island, with opportunities to sabotage the cult's catastrophic plans. The climax hints at intense battles and critical choices that will determine the fate of not just Shanghai, but possibly the entire world. The ultimate showdown against the cult culminates in a desperate race against time, with stakes that resonate far beyond the immediate threats faced in Shanghai.

Key Elements	Description
Setting	Shanghai, a blend of Western and Eastern cultures, reflecting colonialism and local sects.
Main Antagonist	The Order of the Bloated Woman, dedicated to Nyarlathotep.
Key Ally	Jack Brady, former Carlyle Expedition member, provides information on cult activities.
Critical	Sir Aubrey Penhew is alive and operating on Gray Dragon Island.

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Key Elements	Description
Revelation	
Major Threat	The cult's plan involves a rocket to open the Great Gate, releasing horrors.
Factions	Players encounter various groups, including Ho Fang, the Order's leader, and Carl Stanford, a sorcerer.
Themes	Survival, loyalty, madness, and the contrast between serenity and malevolence.
Objective	Gather resources and secrets, including the Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan, to combat the cult.
Climax	Confrontation on Gray Dragon Island, with high stakes and time-sensitive decisions.

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Chapter 9: Grand Conclusion

In Chapter 9 of "Masks of Nyarlathotep," titled "Grand Conclusion," the narrative ties together key events leading up to January 14, 1926, the day a total solar eclipse occurs, setting the stage for climactic final confrontations with Nyarlathotep and his cultists. This chapter serves as both a culmination of the investigators' efforts and a reflection on their successes and failures throughout the campaign.

The action spans several significant locations, such as New York, London, Egypt, Kenya, Australia, and China, expressing the global nature of Nyarlathotep's sinister influence. In the United States, if the investigators have failed to deal with Mukunga M'Dari, he and his cult will perform dark rituals that may culminate in violence. Conversely, if they have successfully thwarted him, the cult's power diminishes. In England, the fate of the London branch of the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh hinges on the investigators' actions against its leaders, Edward Gavigan and Zahra Shafik. Should the investigators have eliminated the leaders, the cult may falter.

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